

## ELDER RUDGER CLAWSON.

gone, you feel light, the Spirit of the Lord is upon you, and everything seems illuminated.

Brethren and sisters, God bless you. Let us have a good Conference; and in order that we may have, let us have a prayerful spirit all the time, and especially when Elders arise here to address you. Amen.

### ELDER RUDGER CLAWSON.

Pride and class distinctions displeasing to God—  
Duty of supporting the poor—Tithe-paying is educational.

I will read a few words from the 2nd chapter of Jacob in the Book of Mormon:

"Think of your brethren, like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all, and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you.

"But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God.

"And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ, ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them, for the intent to do good; to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick, and the afflicted.

"And now, my brethren, I have spoken unto you concerning pride; and those of you which have afflicted your neighbor, and persecuted him because ye were proud in your hearts, of the things which God hath given you, what say ye of it?

"Do ye not suppose that such things are abominable unto him who created all flesh? And the one being is as precious in his sight as the other. And all flesh is of the dust; and for the self-same end hath he created them, that they should keep his commandments, and glorify him for ever."

My brethren and sisters: I have selected a text this morning, but I do not know that I shall be able to speak to it as I desire at all times to leave my mind open to the impressions of the Holy Spirit, and not place myself in a position to resist that influence. I am reminded of a circumstance that occurred with one of the home missionaries in the Boxelder Stake, which shows that it is not always safe to rely upon a text. This brother was called to go out and visit one of the wards, and before going he selected a text. He pondered upon the text, and perhaps considered in a measure what he should say. When he came to the meeting he opened the Bible and turned to the page where he expected

to find his text. He searched and searched, but could not find it. He must have been five minutes before that congregation hunting for his text, and he stood as one who was dazed. After a few moments, however, the Spirit of the Lord came to his assistance, and he made a pretty good talk, doubtless better than if he had followed the text. It transpired that the particular leaf containing the words he expected to read had been lost from that Bible, and that was the reason he could not find his text.

I believe that it is the purpose of the Lord to make this people rich. See what a vast multitude inhabit these valleys of the mountains. Go out among them; study their characteristics—industry, temperance, thrift—and they are such as will make any people wealthy in the course of time. But there is danger in riches. Jacob was aware of this, and he called the attention of his people to it. The possession of wealth generally brings class distinctions; class distinctions bring pride; and pride, we are told, is an abomination in the sight of heaven. These class distinctions are very apparent in the world, more particularly in the large cities. We read the other day of a wedding in high life, and we were told that millions of money were married to millions of money, and that it was a very auspicious affair. Everything connected with that wedding was of the most magnificent order. Costly presents were made, including diamonds of rare value, and golden dishes. Think of people eating out of golden dishes, and at the same time being surrounded by many who are not in a condition to purchase even the simple necessities of life, some perhaps actually starving to death for the want of food. Now, the children of the rich, surrounded by the condition that I have mentioned, with superior opportunities of education and culture, in time, get to think that they are better than the children of the poor. They can wear better clothing, they can eat better food, they have better conditions in every way, and so seem to think they are better. Let us imagine for a moment a poor man, albeit an honest, intelligent man, and one who may stand high in the estimation of heaven, coming into a gathering of the

rich—why, the social distinction between that poor man and the rich man is so great that doubtless it would be thought to be a contamination to have him there, and a demand for his withdrawal would be made. They cannot associate together. Yet, my brethren and sisters, the Prophet Jacob tells us that we are made of one flesh. God does not draw these distinctions that we find upon the earth. We are led to understand from the scriptures that God is no respecter of persons, and that these social distinctions that are in the world, and in some degree perhaps in our midst, are not pleasing in His sight. He judges not as men judge. He looks not upon the features; He considers not the wearing apparel; but He looks into the heart. We have seen this exemplified in many cases. You will remember the case of David. Samuel the prophet was sent by God to anoint a king over Israel, and he was to find this king among the sons of Jesse. Doubtless, Jesse was very much pleased with this idea, and he passed his sons in review before the prophet. They were fine, beautiful men. It may be that Samuel himself was impressed with their appearance, and if he had been left to himself he might have selected one of them; but the Spirit of the Lord whispered to him that he was not to place his hands on any of those. So the prophet enquired of Jesse if he had other sons, and Jesse remembered that he did have another son—a boy—who was out herding the sheep. The prophet asked to see him. When he came into his presence the Spirit of the Lord inspired the prophet to say, This is the man. He laid his hands upon him and anointed him to be king of Israel. The Lord judged from the heart. He knew the hearts of these sons of Jesse, and David was the chosen one.

So, my brethren and sisters, if there are to be distinctions among us, they must not be based upon our financial condition, but rather upon the principle of righteousness. One man is better than another if he is more righteous than the other. One man is more acceptable to the Lord than another if he lives nearer to the Lord than the other.

The prophet Jacob points out very

clearly the manner in which it would be safe for His people to seek after riches. First seek the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all other things will be added. Then if we seek for riches we will do it with the intent to accomplish good and to use them for the benefit and blessing of mankind and for the establishment and upbuilding of the Church and Kingdom of God. Besides, administering to the wants of the poor and to the sick and afflicted, the Prophet Jacob might also have with propriety mentioned the principle of tithing—if they observed that law in that day—and other principles pertaining to the Gospel. I have thought sometimes that God revealed this principle of tithing to His people in order that they should not be swallowed up in a spirit of selfishness; that their souls might be enlarged by taking of their substance and imparting it to the Church, and performing other righteous deeds.

The poor we have always with us. It was said by Abraham Lincoln that God must love the poor because he has made so many of them. The Savior seemed to think a great deal of the poor. He came to preach the Gospel to them, to administer to their wants, to heal the sick, to cast out devils, to open the eyes of the blind. His life and His ministry was devoted to the poor. You will find, if you study closely the revelations of God found in the Book of Covenants, that a great amount of space is devoted to the poor. We are reminded of them continually; that we shall divide our substance with them. The fast day has been instituted, in part, for that purpose. It has been estimated that if the entire people of the Latter-day Saints would give to the poor the value of the two meals that they refrain or should refrain from partaking of upon that day, the poor of this church would be well provided for. But, let me tell you, this is not done; at least, it is not done in our Stake, and I presume it is not done in other Stakes. I have sometimes thought it would be an excellent thing to revive the custom of early days, in sending to the various families in the ward and gathering up their fast offerings; for

the Bishops of the Church well know that the people many times have offerings to make that they cannot very well carry to the fast meeting, and by sending around and reminding the people of this duty, a great amount of good can be accomplished. I have recommended this to the Bishops in the Boxelder Stake, and where they have carried out this counsel most excellent results have followed. This is a matter of vital importance. If we neglect the poor, God will neglect us. We must look after them. Those who are so highly favored must divide their substance with them. And we must remember to observe this law of tithing. When a man's income amounts to only a few hundred dollars a year, it is a simple matter to pay tithing; but you will notice that as a man is increased in his substance, as God opens the windows of heaven and pours down blessings upon him, there is a tendency to drop off in the paying of tithing. It is easier for a man who is getting a thousand dollars a year to pay an honest tithing to the Lord than for a man who is getting ten thousand dollars a year; and it is easier for a man who gets ten thousand dollars a year to pay an honest tithing than for a man who gets a hundred thousand dollars a year. It seems to be almost impossible for a man with that enormous income to pay a just tithing to the Lord. Yet the tithing belongs to the Lord, and He expects that we will observe this law, that this may be indeed a land of Zion unto us.

Brethren and sisters, I rejoice in pondering upon the principles of the Gospel; and in my weak way I am endeavoring to observe these laws and commandments. I feel blessed in it, and I can recommend it to you. I know there is a blessing attendant upon the observance of the laws of God. I pray that His blessing may be upon the us, that His peace may be in our midst, and that His Spirit may be poured out abundantly upon the Saints in this general Conference, that we may be strengthened, edified, renewed in our faith, and encouraged to go on and accomplish the will of God. I ask it in the name of Jesus. Amen.

## ELDER ABRAHAM O. WOODRUFF.

Value of inspired counsel—The Saints expanding by faith and colonization—Success in missionary work.

I assure you, my brethren and sisters, that in occupying this position this morning I feel very humble, and very dependent upon the Lord for His Spirit to give me utterance. I rejoice in seeing so many present, and in realizing the number of aged veterans there are in our midst who lived in the days of the Prophet Joseph, and who are pleased to bear testimony of the divinity of that Prophet's mission. It is remarkable how the Lord has preserved so many of those who lived in the days of the Prophet Joseph, and I am always made glad in listening to their testimony for those who were so intimately associated with the Prophet, and who knew him best, loved him best. I thank the Lord that He has preserved the Prophet of God who stands in our midst today, and has sustained him and does sustain him by His matchless power. I rejoice in his teachings, and the people ought to appreciate the counsels given by this man of God. Many people wish they had lived in the time when Christ was upon the earth; they think they would have loved the Lord and been more devoted to Him than they are at the present time. But every time we hold a general Conference we uphold and sustain the Prophet of God as His mouthpiece, His vicegerent upon the earth, and the question arises in my mind many times, Do we appreciate the counsels that are given us from this man? Are we willing to accept of his words as the word of God? When we ask his advice, do we ask believing and expecting to carry it out, whether it comes in conflict with our own selfish desires and ambitions or not? I often feel that we do not. People ask counsel at times if they think they can get that which will be favorable to their own selfish desires; but if they thought they would get counsel which would be contrary to their own wishes, they would refrain from asking it.

In visiting the outside settlements of Zion I have been made to realize the great faith of the people. I have wondered at the works they have performed, through the faith they have in